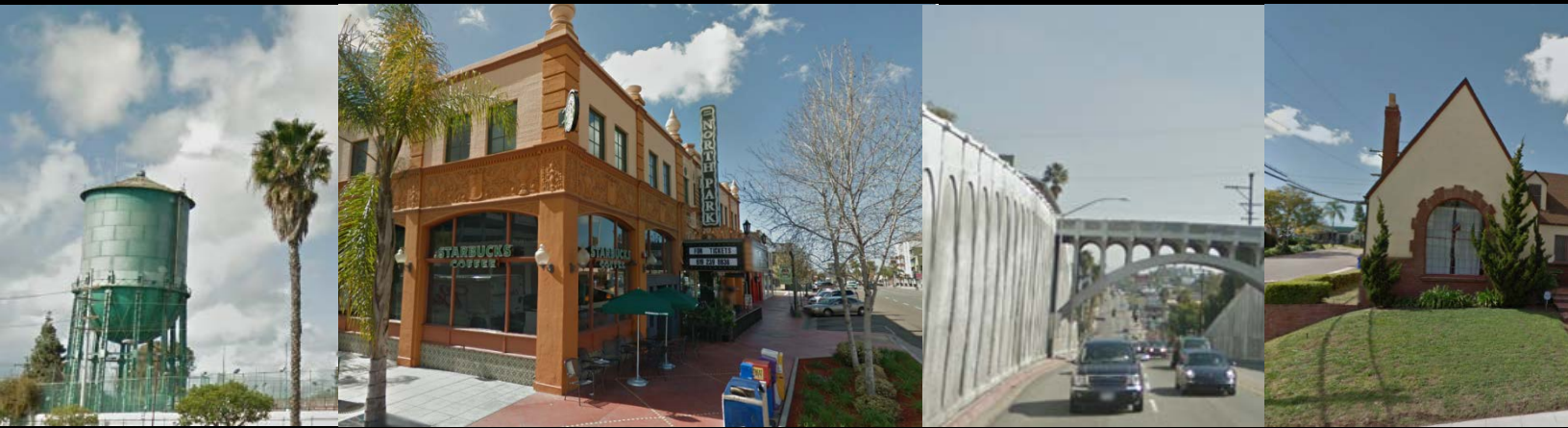


NORTH PARK COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE



PUBLIC DRAFT URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT OCTOBER 2014

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CHAPTER 4 : URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

4.0 INTRODUCTION

North Park is recognized as a local leader in neighborhood revitalization while respecting the existing character of the community. Generations of community members have dedicated their energies to preserving and enhancing the built environment and landscapes in order to maintain North Park's desirability as a place to live, work, shop, play and visit. As one of San Diego's most established communities, North Park is a place of iconic landmarks, historic residential neighborhoods, and retail charm. North Park is also recognized as a cultural and arts center as well as the center of San Diego's craft beer, slow food and bicycle cultures.



North Park began to grow and expand in 1907 when electric streetcars existed. Since that time, mixed use development has continued to extend east and west along University Avenue and Adams Avenue. In the 1920s, North Park saw a new type of commercial development as the automobile became more and more viable. Because land prices adjacent to the trolley lines were expensive, El Cajon Boulevard began to attract automobile catered businesses. Unfortunately from the 1960s to the 1990s, North Park developed and grew



with little regard to the existing scale, character, and context of the buildings and homes. This may have been attributable to the relatively low cost of land, run-down condition of some buildings, zoning and regulations that allowed for easy lot consolidation. Whatever the reason, many single family residential homes were torn down and replaced with Huffman six pack style apartments with large front parking lots that disrupted the scale, diminished the character and reduced the walkability of neighborhoods.

Urban Design addresses the relationship and characteristics of new buildings, groups of buildings, spaces, and landscapes within existing neighborhoods, districts and corridors. It assimilates the relationships between buildings, streets, land use, open spaces, circulation, height, density, parking, and parks. In short, urban design is concerned with how places function, not just how they look. The traditional urban design and planning principles that originally built North Park promoted human-scale places because walking was the primary form of transportation. These same principles encouraged a mix of residential and non-residential land uses as opposed to separation of land uses. Urban design seeks to balance public and private interests, considers the people that are served by the public realm and quality of life, and the built environment of a community's public spaces. New projects can include innovative and dynamic forms while still being sensitive to its adjacent neighbors. This element highlights the community's desires, character defining features of North Park, how a place functions, and the unique attributes of what sets North Park apart.

